to the Task Force, this would require an investment of Rs. 10,500 crore during the Tenth Plan and another Rs. 51,000 crores during the Eleventh Plan. Other salient recommendations of the Task Force are as follows:

(i) The financial assistance to the farmers for microirrigation should be 50% of unit cost, out of which 40% share should be from Government of India and the balance 10% by the respective State Governments. The States may raise their share through Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) loan from National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD).

(ii) The funds need to be released through NABARD/lead banks.

(iii) There should be tax concessions to make the system affordable by the farmers.

(c) The Department of Agriculture & Cooperation is presently implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Macro Management in Agriculture-Supplementation/Complementation of State Efforts through Work Plans under which, among other programmes, assistance is being given to the farmers for promoting drip irrigation and sprinkler irrigation in the country. With a view to give focused attention and for increasing the coverage of urea under microirrigation, it is proposed to launch a new Scheme to Microirrigation for implementation during the Xth Plan.

High yielding variety sugarcane

1606. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that scientists of Sugarcane Research Institute, Tamil Nadu, have developed a high yielding sugarcane variety suited well for problem soil and drought conditions; and

(b) if so, when it is expected to be declared officially for sugarcane growers in order to derive early benefits?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Scientists of Sugarcane Research Station, Cuddalore of the Tamil Nadu Agriculture University have developed a high yielding sugarcane variety CoC (SC) 22, which is suitable for problem soils and withstands drought conditions.

(b) The variety has already been released by Government of Tamil Nadu for cultivation by the farmers.

Transgenic Crops

1607. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering transgenic as an important area for future development of agriculture;

(b) if so, what are the crops in which research is being conducted;

(c) the amount earmarked for the transgenic research;

(d) the details of scientists working in the area;

(e) the tentative time for developing transgenic seeds;

(f) whether ICAR can alone compete with MNCs and developed nations on research programmes; and

(g) whether Government will consider having a joint venture research activity with private sector in transgenics?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Research is being conducted in several crops such as rice, sorghum, maize, chickpea, pigeonpea, cotton, brassica, banana, papaya, tomato brinjal, potato, cassava, cabbage, sugarcane, grapes etc. by the National Agriculture Research System in the country.

(c) Funds have been provided under Plan/Non-Plan to promote biotechnological applications in agriculture mainly by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and Department of Biotechnology (DBT). Funds have been earmarked to various organizations/institutes of the National Agricultural Research System for research in the broad area of biotechnology, which also includes research in transgenics. Besides need-based institutes/centrres, there are centres such as National Research Centre on Plant Biotechnology, New Delhi (Rs. 5.46 crores approx. being the Plan and Non-Plan outlay for the year 2004-05) which is working exclusively on agricultural biotechnology including transgenic research.